

The RADA Act is a serious step towards cracking down on the use of performance-enhancing drugs in major international competitions because it establishes criminal penalties and civil remedies for doping fraud.

A number of other nations, including Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and Spain, have embraced criminal sanctions for doping fraud violations and it is time for the United States to be added to this list.

Doping fraud in major international competitions—like the Olympics, the World Cup and the Tour de France—is often linked with corruption, bribery and money laundering.

It is not just victory that criminals engaged in doping fraud snatch away from clean athletes—athletes depend on prize money and sponsorships to sustain their livelihoods.

INFLATED GAS PRICES

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, in my home State of Rhode Island and all across America, people are working harder than ever just to get by. Wages are flat and costs continue to rise. In fact, just last month, gas prices hit a 3-year high. It is obscene. Working people have been getting ripped off at the pump for years.

One of the biggest reasons is that countries in OPEC and other foreign oil cartels work together to inflate the cost of gas. Some folks think there is nothing we can do about this.

That is why, last month, along with Congressman STEVE CHABOT, I introduced the No Oil Producing and Exporting Cartels Act, or NOPEC Act. This is a commonsense bill that will help bring down the cost of gas by making members of OPEC and other foreign oil cartels subject to U.S. anti-trust laws and preventing them from price gouging. It prohibits those same companies from withholding their supply of oil in order to raise prices.

Earlier this week, our bill was approved by the House Judiciary Committee. I look forward to this bill coming to the floor and its swift passage. It is long past time that we deliver some much-needed relief to working people in this country.

PICK ON SOMEBODY YOUR OWN SIZE

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, when Members attack one another on this floor, we sometimes have to apologize publicly.

What is the appropriate penalty when a Presidential administration attacks children in our country?

That is what is happening now at the border, as children are forcibly taken from their parents. Even if these children were being held in palatial splendor, nothing could make up for being taken from the only adult they have known since birth.

Our country's policy has always been family unification. Breaking with that policy and with decency, Donald Trump and Jeff Sessions have devised a new deterrent for crossing the border to seek asylum.

Says Jeff Sessions: "If you're smuggling a child, then we're going to prosecute you, and that child will be separated from you."

If they want to attack border crossers, the Trump administration should pick on somebody their own size.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CHRISTOPHER ROYBAL

(Mr. KIHUEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIHUEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to remember the life of Christopher Roybal. He was a decorated U.S. Navy veteran who had survived two shootouts while serving in Afghanistan. He attended the Route 91 festival in Las Vegas on October 1.

Christopher served in the Navy for 7 years before he left on a medical discharge after he had become mostly deaf in his left ear from all the explosions that happened near him. After leaving the Navy, he began working with Crunch Fitness gyms, where he managed new facilities as they opened around the country.

Christopher went to the Route 91 festival with friends and family to celebrate his upcoming 29th birthday.

Everyone who knew him remembers him as a man who could always put a smile on everyone's face. His favorite thing to do was serenading his friends with Spanish ballads and going out to sing karaoke.

I would like to extend my condolences to Christopher Roybal's family and friends. Please know that the city of Las Vegas, the State of Nevada, and the whole country grieve with you.

APPOINTMENT OF INDIVIDUAL TO UNITED STATES-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RUTHERFORD). The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 1238(b)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (22 U.S.C. 7002), as amended, and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, of the following individual on the part of the House to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission for a term expiring on December 31, 2019:

Rear Admiral Michael McDevitt, U.S. Navy, Retired, Arlington, Virginia

□ 1700

POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) is recognized for 60

minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material that they would bring on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to take this hour with several of my distinguished colleagues to talk about a matter of moral, social, political, and economic urgency to the American people, which is the vast group of Americans who are living in poverty today.

We are observing the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's Poor People's March on Washington, the Poor People's Campaign, which he was organizing and starting work on shortly before his assassination. The Poor People's March on Washington took place even after the death of Dr. King.

Today, there is a new Poor People's Campaign, a national call for moral revival that has been working for the last 2 years, reaching out to communities across the country, working in more than 35 States across America in order to put in the very forefront of the public consciousness the fact that tens of millions of our fellow citizens simply don't have enough money to meet the basic needs of life.

The Poor People's Campaign has met with tens of thousands of Americans and witnessed the courage and strength of a lot of poor people across the country, and they have gathered testimony from hundreds of individual Americans. A number of the testimonials will be read this evening by Members of Congress in this Special Order.

The testimony we are going to read powerfully reinforces the empirical assessment conducted by the Poor People's Campaign and the Institute for Policy Studies about the effect of systemic poverty, racism, ecological devastation, and militarism in the country. "The Souls of Poor Folk" report reveals how the evils of these inter-related problems are persistent, pervasive, and perpetuated by a distorted moral narrative that must be challenged today.

We believe that, when Americans across the country see the faces and the facts that are represented in this testimony and by this report, America will be moved deeply to change things. When confronted with the undeniable truth of the indignity and the cruelty of poor circumstances that so many of our fellow Americans are living under, we believe that millions more Americans will join the ranks of those who are determined to see an end to poverty in our lifetime.

I am joined by a number of my colleagues this evening who will come up

and read some of the testimonials as well as give thoughts of their own. I will be interspersing some commentary of my own as I bring up my colleagues. I am beginning first with my colleague GWEN MOORE from Wisconsin.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE), who is a great leader for the people of Wisconsin and a terrific spokesperson for poor people across the country.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, as you mentioned, the Poor People's Campaign was a national call for a moral revival.

What we are doing here now: We are reengaging the Poor People's Campaign for the nonviolent economic reform movement that the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King was organizing when he was assassinated in 1968.

This resurgence is being called the most extensive wave of nonviolent direct action in our Nation's history. What this resurgence recognizes is that Dr. King was right, that the trifecta of racism, poverty, and militarism are interconnected. Today they are trapping more than 140 million Americans in poverty and low wealth, and many of them are children and veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk to you about one of Dr. King's triple evils, militarism. I want to talk about it because we have a total volunteer Army now. We don't have the draft. So the young people who are being recruited into our military today are young people, often from low-income households, who are seeking an opportunity, and they are being seduced into the military with promises of technical training, bonuses, and college.

I would like to share with you a letter from one of those people, Mr. Brock McIntosh of Illinois. He says:

This way of injecting the poisonous drugs of hate into veins of people, normally humane, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love.

I would like to tell you all about the precise moment I realized that there was poison in me. I am the child of a nurse and a factory worker in the heartland of Illinois, the family of blue collar and service workers.

At the height of the Iraq war, military recruiters at my high school attracted me with signup bonuses and college assistance that some saw as their ticket out. For me, I hoped it was my ticket up, providing opportunities that I once felt were out of reach.

Two years later, when I was 20 years old, I was standing over the body of a 16-year-old Afghan boy. A roadside bomb he was building prematurely detonated. He was covered in shrapnel and burns and now lay sedated after having one of his hands amputated by our medics. His other hand had the callused roughness of a farmer or a shepherd.

As he lay there with a peaceful expression, I studied the details of his face and caught myself rooting for him: "If this boy knew me," I thought, "he wouldn't want to kill me." And here I am, I am supposed to want to kill him, and I feel bad that I wanted him to live.

Now, that is the poisoned mind. That is the militarized mind. And all the opportunities afforded me by the military can't repay the cost of war on my soul.

It is poor folks who carry the burden of war for the elites who send them. A working-

class boy from Illinois, sent halfway around the world to kill a young farmer—how did we get here? How did this crazy war economy come to be?

First, there is the demand. A society that feels perpetually threatened perpetually prepares for war, even in the time of peace. To do this requires a military industrial complex, a vast war economy whose charters, profits, stocks, and jobs depend on permanent militarization and whose fortune prospers most in times of war.

Secondly, there is the supply. A Nation that wants to attract volunteers to its military and care for veterans provides opportunities that will lure recruits who are predominantly working-class folks with limited opportunities.

We need a Poor People's Campaign to amplify the voices like this, of regular folks, above the lobby of a militarized industry, a poisoned economy, to demand jobs in industries other than war-making, to demand opportunities for working-class folks that don't require killing other working-class folks.

We need a Poor People's Campaign to demand justice for people of color, killed by militarized police forces, a poisoned law enforcement.

We need a Poor People's Campaign to transform a militarized politic, a poisoned Congress, and a poisoned White House that proves their toughness with chest beating and unites their base with war drumming.

War always has a way of distracting our attention and perverting our priorities. We need a Poor People's Campaign to organize for racial, economic, and ecological justice, to force these issues to the front and rectify our Nation's agenda.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. MOORE for that powerful testimony.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL), my colleague.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership in the Progressive Caucus and thank all my colleagues for the deep devotion that they have shown over the years to addressing racism, poverty, and inequality.

It is my honor to help bring a light, shine a light, on the stories of men and women around the country who are fighting to make ends meet. These are our neighbors, our brothers, our children, our parents, our friends, and they are struggling.

Here is an incredible statistic: Across the United States today, 67 percent of all Americans do not even have \$1,000 in their savings accounts. That means they can't take care of a leak in the roof; they can't take care of a sick child; and if they don't get paid sick days, they don't get to take care of an aging parent. They are focused merely on surviving and not on thriving. That is outrageous for a country of our wealth.

It is time for us to lift up the American people who are the bedrock, the national bedrock, of our country: the teacher who spends more time with our children than any other but hasn't yet been compensated for that; the domestic workers and the caregivers who take care of our elderly, our homes, and our lives with their grace,

strength, compassion, and efficiency; the laborers who build the foundations of the homes and the workplaces that we stand on, live and work in; the women in every single industry who have faced disrespect, unequal pay, but are the glue that hold our society and our families together; the farmworkers who pick the food we eat; the nurses who listen to our hearts and bring us back to wellness; the sanitation workers; the parks people; the oceanographers; the scientists; the servers; the artists; the advocates who shine a light on the most vulnerable, the poorest, among us.

These are the people who have come together as the Poor People's Campaign under the incredible leadership, the visionary leadership, of Reverend William Barber, and with a huge coalition of organizations to fight against racism, poverty, inequality, militarism, and ecological devastation that continue to plague our country still today.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join Representative RASKIN and others as we tell their stories today. I am proud to stand with these courageous soldiers for peace and for justice as we fight for equity, and I thank them for leading with love, with generosity, and with abundance.

One of those people is Reverend Sarah Monroe from my home State of Washington. I wanted to start by reading her testimony:

I wanted to start by speaking to the context I am in. I am speaking as a Christian theologian. I am speaking as a person working in one of the least religious parts of the country. And I am also speaking, more specifically, as a pastor and an Episcopal priest in Grays Harbor County. This is a rural community on the Pacific coastline of Washington State.

I also grew up in this county. We face a postindustrial economy. Timber was our main industry, and today it is gone. We live in a context where 46 percent of our people are on public assistance and one out of 25 people are homeless. We are a majority White community just south of the Quinault Indian Nation, who were and continue to be victims of genocide.

We have very little legal industry to employ our people, which means that our people turn to a black-market economy that most often sells and trades drugs, sex, just about everything else, and also brings our young people into extensive gang involvement.

So many of our most struggling people, both White and Native, are very young. They are millennials. They are teenagers who have never had a steady income, many of whom have been incarcerated as young as 8.

So, in this context, morally, we face a lot of issues, and three of those I want to talk about right now.

First, we as an organization are committed to lifting up the leadership and the agency of poor and struggling people.

□ 1715

We believe that God takes the side of the poor. And we believe that Jesus built the poor people's movement. We believe in raising up young leaders from the streets, from the jails, from the homeless encampments, from the trailer parks in Grays Harbor County. And we believe that they are the only

moral voices that can save us and that can lead us to liberation.

We believe that the outcasts and the sex workers and the drug addicted will find their own healing and will bring that healing to us all. We believe that no poor people's movement or campaign can be built without this fundamental commitment.

As one example of that, we had a group over this past Easter of young men in jail, and they organized their own Bible study. They fasted and prayed. And they came to us and said, from Isaiah 58, which they were reading and studying, that they were called to be the Restorers of the Streets with Dwellings.

Second, in this county, as in so many other places across this country, we face the moral issue of State violence. What I mean by this is that poor people in this country are systematically disenfranchised at every turn. That means that the county has money for militarized police equipment, but not for housing. The county and the cities in this county have resources for consultants to build the tourist industry, but not for providing a path out of poverty for young people.

But what I also mean is that our people across lines of race face extensive police brutality. Death, beatings, shakedowns, and the use—and really the extensive use—of a bench warrant system that ensures that if you are young and you are poor, you are likely to have a warrant that allows you to be stopped or chased at any time.

Most of our young people go from the juvenile system to an early felony for drug possession or property crime and spend most of their lives in and out of jail and prison where they also experience extensive and institutionalized violence. State power now, as in the time of Jesus, is used to violently repress people and to deprive them of their rights.

But last, we are theologically committed to hope. And for us, hope is not a feeling, because we face powers that are larger than us at every turn, and we know that we face impossible odds. We face a staggering amount of personal and communal trauma. We openly stand against the narrative of White supremacy that has often been fed to our people, and we believe in the power of the Gospel.

We believe in the power of the moral voice of the people waking up and claiming their own dignity, even when they are taught to deny it at every turn. Claiming their own power when they are taught that they are powerless. We believe that we are a resurrection people. Even when Jesus was murdered by empire, and I said this in a sermon a couple of years ago for Easter, that he rose again, and, in rising, God gave the finger to every power in this world that seeks to oppress the poor and keep us down.

I thank the reverend from our community for that testimony and that story. We have other stories, but I want to make sure other Members have a chance to tell theirs as well.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. JAYAPAL for her eloquent statement and thank her for her leadership here in Congress.

One of the shocking findings of the Poor People's Campaign is that there are nearly 140 million Americans, more than 43 percent of people in our country who are either legally poor, living below the poverty line, or low income in the United States, which is the world's richest Nation, and we are at the richest moment in our history today.

And yet, we still have 140 million people who simply don't have enough money to meet the basic expenses of existence. This should not be a matter of partisan politics. It should be a matter of concern to everybody on both sides of the aisle and across the political spectrum.

Here is President Dwight Eisenhower speaking in April of 1953. On April 16, 1953, he said:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. The cost of one modern bomber, President Eisenhower said, is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities, 2 electric power plants, 2 hospitals, a half million bushels of wheat, 8,000 new homes.

And he said:

This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense, this cloud of threatening war that is paid for by the treasure of our people.

So we are appealing to people across the political spectrum at this time of roaring stock market and trumpeted claims of great wealth and bounty in the society to look at the costs of social and economic inequality; that is, what it is like looking, not from the top down, but from the bottom up at the situation with wealth in America.

I am delighted now to yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA), my distinguished colleague, who has been a great champion of putting the question of poverty and economic inequality at the forefront of our discussions here.

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative RASKIN for his leadership in putting focus on the Poor People's Campaign and his advocacy for so many issues of economic justice and racial justice.

I want to join my colleagues in recognizing the extraordinary moment in this country that the Poor People's Campaign has had under Reverend Barber's leadership. There was a panel that Senator WARREN had a few days ago where Reverend Barber was there and ordinary individuals were testifying about their experiences, the people we should be hearing in Congress.

I want to share two quotes, and then share some testimony.

One is what Reverend Barber said, which, in my view, makes him one of the great civil rights leaders in this country. He said:

I would rather join with you and die trying to change the moral direction of this Nation than to live and die and it be written on my epitaph: "Lived in the time when moral dissent was necessary. And he, and they, said nothing."

That requires such courage, and it is so believable.

When Dr. Barber was with a number of others at the hearing, they had this chant that before the Poor People's Campaign will fail, they will go to jail. And that sense of civil disobedience for a moral cause is part of the great tradi-

tion of our Nation and what has brought change.

I want to thank Reverend Barber for being such a moral leader and everyone who is risking arrest, risking their life for justice.

Now, I am honored to read the testimony of Paul Boden, who is the Western Regional Advocacy Project lead in my home State of California. He writes:

My name is Paul Boden, and I am with the Western Regional Advocacy Project lead. We are based out of California, Colorado, and Oregon with core member groups doing local organizing around poverty and homelessness issues in 10 communities. I am testifying today about the advent of contemporary homelessness in the early 1980s and the connection to neoliberal economics and how that has played out over the past 35 years.

In doing this research, we found that with 2 less attack submarines, 29 less fighter jets, and 2 less combat ships, we would more than triple all of the funding that is currently dedicated to public housing capital investments, public housing maintenance, and all of the Federal homeless programs. Clearly, these spending priorities have nothing to do with security or the need for an investment in our military complex.

As part of the consequence of the advent of homelessness that this kind of approach to governance created, we've spoken to 1,600 homeless communities, and 82 percent of them have reported that they are getting arrested, harassed, and ticketed. And we know the fines-and-fee-games that local governments play. 77 percent of these people are getting that same kind of policing activity for sitting or laying down on a sidewalk. 75 percent for loitering. Sleeping, standing, and sitting are criminal offenses when you are the population that is being targeted by local government for removal from those communities. And this is happening, unfortunately, in communities across the United States.

My research also brought out very clearly and undeniably that these are the same policing programs, these are the same laws, the same racist and classist policing programs that were used with the Anti-Okie laws, with the Sundown towns, with the Japanese-American Exclusion Act, with the ugly laws, and with the Jim Crow laws. The darker your skin color, the greater your disability, the poorer you are, you are way more likely to be a target of these policing programs, and that is the way it has been playing out for years.

We have written legislation and gotten it introduced in California, Oregon, and Colorado. We had introduced it 8 times. We got crushed 8 times. But we are going to keep bringing it back until the final answer is yes. Our law, our legislation would make it illegal for local government to criminalize life-sustaining activities and activities that we all commit: eating, sleeping, sitting, standing still. We all do that. To criminalize doing it is to purposely and maliciously create legislation specifically aimed at enforcement only applying to some people. That is us, all of us.

Paul Boden's words are ones I hope this entire country will hear. And as we are listening to the voices of so many people marching in our streets in Washington, I hope we will take some inspiration from their courage, their courage far exceeding any of ours in this body, and be inspired to do the

right thing and fight for economic justice and the policies that they recommend that would help alleviate poverty and help the working poor and poor people across this Nation.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. KHANNA so much for his very moving statement that he made.

I yield now to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), my colleague, who has been a terrific champion for economic equity and social justice in our country. I am delighted to yield to her now.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman RASKIN for his leadership, consistent leadership, on these issues. And certainly, I think, the recognition of the fact that the poor of this Nation, both in the biblical sense of our faith or the document of your faith, the poor have always been acknowledged, and, in a certain sense, in the Christian Bible honored.

And it is a sad state of affairs for us to come to this point in the Nation to realize that our poor are suffering at large numbers and that there is no relief.

I know that Dr. King, some 50 years ago, as he was planning the Poor People's march—and many of us realized that he was not able to fulfill it for he was shot by an assassin's bullet on April 4, 1968. But the valiant people went forward with his dream of eliminating poverty. And I am reminded of his words: Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere.

And so I speak today of the sprinkling, the harsh sprinkling of poverty and injustices in this Nation today, and I make it a very special message to the leader of the free world, who has every power to collaborate with this important body, to make commitments to end the very conditions that Dr. King, some 50 years ago, sought to come to Washington that was ultimately proceeded with by leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and poor people from around the Nation.

□ 1730

They might not have succeeded specifically, but they did bring to the Nation's eyes and hearts the violence of poverty among Native Americans, Latinos, African Americans, poor, and Caucasians in places beyond the South. And, interestingly enough, that poverty continues.

I speak, in particular, of certain elements that show our lack of concern and where we must get steady and back on track. First, what all of us have been speaking about over the last couple of days and weeks is the untoward and the impossible thought of taking children away from parents who are fleeing poverty, violence, and desperation to come.

We know that, in my home State of Texas, a migrant was separated from his family and committed suicide while in Federal detention. Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere. And a

mother, while breastfeeding her young child, while both were in Federal detention, had her child ripped away from her arms. That must stop. That is a poverty of mind, a poverty of heart and spirit.

I want to thank Reverend Barber, who will be headed to Washington on June 23 with the massive, largest expression of those who still, unfortunately, live in the shadows, not of their own making. When I say that, they are not in the shadows, they are there, but seeming there in the shadows with respect to the policies of this administration, the terrible Robin Hood tax bill that has created nothing but a balloon of wealth to the top 1 percent, so much so that the wages of Americans have not gone up. When you travel throughout the country and in my district, most people don't know, working Americans have no idea that any tax bill was passed that was supposed to impact them because it has not impacted them, and the only thing that is happening is a flush of corporate profits.

Now, it would seem that one is criticizing that success. We are criticizing the unequalness of what happens to working families who work every day and have not had a wage increase.

Then out of that comes the implosion of the Affordable Care Act, brick by brick being taken away. I know of people who have told me that their loved one was put in a wheelchair and pointed toward the door: Get out. And the Affordable Care Act provided that there were no caps on one's insurance until you got better in the hospital. But because of the atmosphere, and the climate, and the constant attack on the Affordable Care Act, hospitals are feeling the burden and are sending people out the door who are not well.

Even more frightening for people are those who have preexisting conditions, one of the glaring parts of the Affordable Care Act, one where people were waving the flag. They were excited, if they had a preexisting condition, which, before the Affordable Care Act, it could have been acne or it could have been pregnancy. But now, that coverage and protection for our loved ones who may have preexisting conditions, loved ones who could function with healthcare and not be relegated to be homebound because they were so sick they could not work.

This is a terrible approach to how you run a country.

In these last two points, I want to make it clear how important it is to recognize that poverty still is. And not only Dr. King, but we recognize that Robert Francis Kennedy, also struck down by an assassin's bullet, worked in his campaign for President in 1968 to bring to the attention of Americans the fact that it is so important to realize poverty exists in the worst way in the mountains and valleys, and urban centers, and that Americans should stand up against poverty.

Poverty impacts the criminal justice system. In 1968, African Americans

were about five to four times as likely as Whites to be imprisoned, or jailed. Compared to today, they are six to four times as likely as Whites to be incarcerated, which is troubling, given the population difference.

As Judge Learned Hand observed, "If we are to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment: Thou shalt not ration justice."

It is important that, as we match meaningful prison reform, we must match it with meaningful sentencing reduction. We must stop the tide of poverty by ending mass incarceration. And we must, in fact, recognize that we must fight against recidivism, open the doors of opportunity for ex-felons as they come out, and make sure that we are reducing those mandatory minimums that have kept people in jail 15, 20, 25, or 30 years away from their family so that their children grow up without them.

We must recognize that poverty attacks at a very young age. It moves people toward the juvenile justice system, and it only causes them to believe this is the only thing that they can engage in. I have introduced legislation to give hope to the juvenile justice system: no more solitary confinement; alternative placement; and if they are able, as they rehabilitate, we ban the box on saying that they have been in the juvenile system.

I want to stop homelessness. That is what Dr. King knew had to end to end that aspect of poverty, and to, of course, end it among our veterans.

I want to end the idea of \$23 billion out of SNAP's program.

And, of course, I want to recognize that when we have these devastating storms, the amount of homelessness goes up. It is so very important to recognize the devastation of Hurricane Harvey, that there are those who are still unhoused, and to make a commitment after every disaster that we make those communities whole: volcanos, tornadoes, fires, and floods.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for allowing us to be here tonight. And I want to conclude by showing this Robin Hood tax bill, stealing from the poor. This year, the administration, President Trump, proposed to slash housing benefits by \$11 billion because we had to pay for the tax cut. Weeks after that tax cut was passed, President Trump proposed to pay for the bill by slashing housing benefits and other supports for low-income people who struggle to make ends meet. And here we stand with the \$1.5 trillion deficit.

So, what is our message? That we must never give up in this fight. We must stand in the tradition of Dr. King. We must be reminded of those who are coming to Washington in the coming days. We must say to have mercy on them. And, of course, as Reverend Barber would always seek, that they be blessed, blessed with mercy and success, as they stand against poverty and stand for the ending and elimination of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congressional Progressive Caucus for anchoring this important Special Order.

In the spirit of the 50th Anniversary of the Poor People's Campaign, we are here today to bring the nation's attention to the issues that affect them: immigration, health care, paid sick leave, criminal justice, homelessness, and environmental justice.

We must act without delay regarding the "zero-tolerance" policy that separates families apprehended on the southern border by U.S. Border Patrol.

As the member of the House Committees on Homeland Security and former Ranking Member of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Maritime and Border Security, I cannot think of a situation more devastating than having the government forcibly separate a parent from her child to a place unknown, for a fate uncertain, absent any form of communication.

Every day, hundreds of persons, ranging from infants and toddlers to adolescents and adults, flee violence, oppression, and economic desperation from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, seeking safe harbor in the United States.

They are not criminals or terrorists, they are refugees seeking asylum.

The level of callousness displayed by this administration towards those seeking refuge within our borders is shocking.

Every day that passes seemingly reveals another horrific tale of a migrant interacting with Trump's border patrol forces and then being worse for the wear because of it.

We know of the immigrant who was deported to Mexico, a country he left when he was three years old, only to be murdered by gang violence just three weeks after his forced return.

We know of the young mother, separated from her children at the border, left to wonder about their fate, safety, future, and whether she would ever see them again.

In my home state of Texas, a migrant who was separated from his family, committed suicide while in federal detention.

A mother who, while breastfeeding her young child when both were in federal detention, had her child ripped away from her arms.

This cannot be how we make America great again, this is how we make America hateful again.

This week brought news that the Trump administration is seeking to build a tent city at Fort Bliss for the purpose of housing children separated from their parents.

This is unconscionable, outrageous and it must stop.

I have written to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security calling for an immediate end to this policy.

America is the envy of the world, in large part because of our welcoming and generous nature.

For over 100 years, those seeking a better life have been drawn to this land by the words on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore."

The current president fails this obligation, but he is who he is.

We must be who we are: a loving, embracing people, eager to share the bounty of this country to all who seek it.

The President and GOP have promised for years now to create a plan to improve health insurance for everybody.

But that promise has not been kept.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has significantly improved the availability, affordability, and quality of health care for tens of millions of Americans, including millions who previously had no health insurance at all.

Americans are rightly frightened by Republican attempts to repeal the ACA without having in place a superior new plan that maintains comparable coverages and comparable consumer choices and protections.

It is beyond dispute that the "Pay More For Less" plan proposed by House Republicans a few months ago fails this test miserably.

The Republican "Pay More For Less Act" is a massive tax cut for the wealthy, paid for on the backs of America's most vulnerable, the poor and working class households.

This "Robin Hood in reverse" bill is unprecedented and breathtaking in its audacity—no bill has ever tried to give so much to the rich while taking so much from the poor and working class.

This Republican scheme gives gigantic tax cuts to the rich, and pays for it by taking insurance away from 24 million people and raising costs for the poor and middle class.

It is despicable and shameful that those elected to serve their people would rather see their pockets full than their constituents healthy and well.

Fifty years or so ago the American Labor Movement was little more than a group of dreamers, and look at it now.

From coast to coast, in factories, stores, warehouse and business establishments of all kinds, industrial democracy is at work.

From ending sweatshop conditions, unlivable wages, and 70-hour workweeks, we have come a long way from our practices over 100 years ago.

However, we still have work to be done.

Currently in America, there are no federal legal requirements for paid sick leave.

For companies subject to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Act does require unpaid sick leave and are only eligible to take FMLA after they have worked for their employer for at least 12 months, worked for at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, and work at a location where at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, state and local government workers were more likely than workers in private industry to have access to paid sick leave but less likely to have access to paid vacations and holidays.

As with workers in private industry, state and local government workers in the lower wage categories were less likely to have access to paid sick leave than workers in higher wage categories.

Workers in lower wage categories were less likely to have access to paid sick leave than more highly paid workers.

For private-industry workers with an average wage in the lowest 10 percent, 27 percent had access to paid sick leave; among workers with an average wage in the highest 10 percent, 87 percent had access to paid sick leave.

This is an atrocity.

We must allow for all of our constituents to be able to work within a healthy environment.

In 1968, African Americans were about 5.4 times as likely as whites to be in prison or jail;

compared to today, African Americans are 6.4 times as likely as whites to be incarcerated, which is especially troubling given that whites are also much more likely to be incarcerated now than they were in 1968.

It is clear the inequalities and disparities that ignited hundreds of American cities in the 1960s still exist and have not been eliminated over the last half-century.

As Judge Learned Hand observed, "If we are to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment: thou shalt not ration justice."

Reforming the criminal justice system so that it is fairer and delivers equal justice to all persons is one of the great moral imperatives of our time.

For reform to be truly meaningful, we must look at every stage at which our citizens interact with the system—from policing in our communities and the first encounter with law enforcement, to the charging and manner of attaining a conviction, from the sentence imposed to reentry and collateral consequences.

The need for meaningful prison reform cannot be overstated because being the world's leader in incarceration is neither morally nor fiscally sustainable for the United States, or the federal government, the nation's largest jailer.

For individuals who have paid their debt, the reentry process is paved with tremendous, and often insurmountable, obstacles resulting in recidivism rates as high as 75 percent in some areas.

More must be done to ensure that the emphasis on incarceration is matched with an equal emphasis on successful reentry so that the approximately 630,000 individuals who re-enter society each year are prepared to be successful in civilian life.

This is why I have also strongly supported and cosponsored legislation that will allow those with a criminal conviction to have a fair chance to compete for jobs with federal agencies and contractors.

I have also been working for many years to stop the over-criminalization of our young people.

Today, more and more young children are being arrested, incarcerated, and detained in lengthy out-of-home placements.

Harsh and lengthy penalties handed down to young offenders increase their risk of becoming physically abused, emotionally traumatized, and reduce their chance of being successfully reintegrated back into their communities.

I have introduced and supported legislation to help reform how youth and juveniles are treated to reduce contact and recidivism within the juvenile and criminal justice system; to help protect them from a system that turns them into life-long offenders.

Just as we need to minimize the conviction of innocent people, we must address the unnecessary loss of life that can result from police and civilian interactions.

Effective law enforcement requires the confidence of the community that the law will be enforced impartially and equally.

That confidence has been eroded substantially in recent years by numerous instances of excessive use of lethal forces.

There is no higher priority than improving the peacefulness of these interactions and rebuilding the trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve and protect.

Currently, over half a million people in the United States on any given night are experiencing homelessness.

Now that Congress has lifted the low spending caps required by law for defense and domestic programs, lawmakers should ensure the highest level of funding possible for affordable housing.

When U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s resources are cut, families may lose access to stable housing, putting them at increased risk of homelessness.

This year, President Trump proposed to slash housing benefits by \$11 billion compared to current levels.

Weeks after passing a massive tax bill that grows our deficit by \$1.5 trillion, the President proposed to pay for the tax bill by slashing support for low income people who struggle to make ends meet.

HUD and The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) affordable housing programs have lifted millions of families out of poverty.

Without this investment, many of these families would be homeless, living in substandard or overcrowded conditions, or struggling to meet other basic needs.

As well, homelessness among the American veteran population is on the rise in the United States and we must be proactive in giving back to those who have given so much to us.

Today, in our country, there are approximately 107,000 veterans (male and female) who are homeless on any given night.

And perhaps twice as many (200,000) experience homelessness at some point during the course of a year.

We have an obligation to provide our veterans the assistance needed to avoid homelessness, which includes adequately funding for programs such as Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (VASH) that provide case-management services, adequate housing facilities, mental health support, and address other areas that contribute to veteran homelessness.

We must commit ourselves to the hard but necessary work of ending veteran homelessness in America because providing a home for veterans to come home to every night is the very least we can do.

As one of the original members of the House Committee on Homeland Security, I am well aware of the range of threats that our nation has faced.

However, I believe that the threats posed by climate change have been ignored to our nation's detriment.

Climate change is the challenge of our lifetime and for far too many years we have heard the warnings from prominent scientists regarding the danger to people if nothing is done to reverse the amounts of Green House gases released into the atmosphere.

All of you will recall the devastation that Hurricane Harvey wreaked on the Houston community last fall.

Neither Houston nor any other city in the nation had ever experienced flooding of the magnitude caused by Harvey.

In addition to the immense costs of recovery and reconstruction, the cost of human lives is always immeasurable.

If we do not collectively and concretely address the looming threat of climate change, we must prepare for many more devastating natural disasters that destroy lives and livelihoods.

In 2015, the Pentagon published a report that found climate change to be a security

risk, because it degrades living conditions, human security and the ability of governments to meet the basic needs of their populations.

Communities within the United States and countries around the world that already are fragile and have limited resources are significantly more vulnerable to disruption and far less likely to respond effectively and be resilient to new challenges caused by climate change.

The poor and marginalized who live in areas that already are prone to the consequences of severe weather because the land was cheaper or unwanted by developers will suffer the early consequence of climate change, but the damage will not stop there it will be felt by all.

As many of you well know, Greenhouse Gases such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) absorb heat (infrared radiation) emitted from Earth's surface.

Increases in these concentrations of these gases in Earth's atmosphere are causing our planet to warm by trapping more of this heat.

Warmer temperatures have caused the Arctic Ice sheets to melt at an unprecedented rate.

This winter we have seen extreme temperature swings in some parts of the country, while in others they have seen no winter at all.

We are at a point where we can no longer wait for action only from Washington D.C., we must begin to take action in our own cities, counties and states to prepare for the challenges we will face if the rise in temperatures is not abated.

It will continue my efforts in Washington to make sure that we have flood study of the greater Houston area to determine the implications of flooding and development in our area.

I urge my colleagues in Congress, and all Americans, to look at what unites us rather than what divides us.

We are linked by our compassion, and bound by the fundamental edict of the American Dream that says we will strive to provide our children with a better life than we had.

We can, and we must, find the common ground necessary to make this dream a reality for Americans of every race and creed, nationality and religion, gender and sexual orientation; indeed for every American wherever he or she may live in this great land regardless of what he or she looks like or who they may love.

We can do it; after all, we are Americans.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative JACKSON LEE for her eloquent words.

There is a distinction between misfortune and injustice. I know this because I am somebody who is a cancer survivor. If you wake up one day and a doctor tells you that you are suffering from stage III colon cancer, and you have not one but two jobs that you love, and constituents that you love, and work that you are engaged with, and a great family, and you are told that you have this terrible diagnosis, it can happen to anybody, and that is a misfortune in life. It happens to people in every State, in every city, and in every country all over the world every day.

But, if you get a diagnosis like that and you can't get healthcare because you are too poor, or because you lost your job, or because, as it used to be,

you loved the wrong person, that is not just a misfortune in life, that is an injustice because we can do something about that. We know how to organize society in such a way that everybody gets healthcare, that everybody gets the attention they need in the event of a catastrophic diagnosis like that.

Life is hard enough with all of the sicknesses, the illnesses, the misfortunes, and the accidents that we don't need to compound the misfortunes of life with governmentally imposed injustice on people. The role of government has to be to liberate people from injustice and to alleviate the misfortunes of life.

But now we have, here in Washington, a whole new public philosophy, which is government is a money-making operation for the President, and the President's friends, and the President's business associates, and the people who surround him. That is the new royalist vision of government that we have in America. It is a betrayal of the original conception, which is that government would be an instrument of the common good of advancing the public interest of everybody in the country, not just the people who happen to use their wealth and their power to get into public office.

Now, if you are poor in America today, you have a lot of problems. You have problems with healthcare. We know that health crises remain the single dominant cause of personal bankruptcy, not business bankruptcy, the kind that the President of the United States filed for five different times. Business bankruptcy is not caused by a sickness or an illness. Donald Trump was perfectly covered in healthcare while his businesses went bankrupt and he got covered. But we have millions of Americans who have been forced into bankruptcy because someone got sick and we didn't have a national health insurance policy to take care of them and they didn't have the private health insurance that they needed.

As Congresswoman JAYAPAL told us, two-thirds of Americans don't have \$1,000 to deal with a personal crisis, whether it is a healthcare crisis or something else. They don't have \$1,000 to deal with it. And we know that for a serious kind of diagnosis, the bills can run in the tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Education is affected by poverty. It affects where you can live, what kind of schools your kids go to, and, if you have to move a lot the way that a lot of poor people do, it is disruptive of the continuity that the educators tell us is necessary for young people to make progress in school, if you are constantly being uprooted and shifted to another school or you have to deal with the various crises and agonies that attend to homelessness.

Well, what about voting? Well, here is someone who provided some testimony about voting, from Kansas City, Missouri. Her name is Latifah Trezvant, with Stand Up Kansas City. She writes this:

My name is Latifah Trezvant, and I work at Burger King, where I make \$9.50 an hour. I am a leader with Stand Up Kansas City. As a low wage worker in America, I deal with a lot. I don't have paid sick leave, and I don't make enough money to afford all my basic needs, like a stable place to live. And now, Missouri lawmakers want to make it harder for people like me to vote.

Earlier this year, we weren't able to afford our rent and had to move out on a moment's notice. In the rush to pack up all my stuff and find some place where I can lay my head, I lost my ID. So I had to get a new State-issued ID. Should be pretty simple, right?

I go to the DMV office, and I am already knowing that I had to have proof of address. As I walk to the window, I tell the lady I need a new ID. She asked for my proof of address and I show her my debit card statement. Immediately, she tells me, "There is nothing I can do for you." And she gives me a piece of paper of the things I needed to use:

A utility bill—I don't have that because I am homeless and I stay with a friend.

A paycheck—I don't have a paycheck because I had to leave my last job when I couldn't afford reliable transportation so I could get to work.

A government check—I don't have that.

A mortgage statement—well, I sure don't have that because I am a low-wage worker and I can't even afford rent, let alone a mortgage statement.

Property tax—no.

A housing rental contract—well, I am homeless, so no.

A bank statement—I don't have a bank account. I don't have enough money to open up a bank account and deal with all those fees and penalties.

Okay, so here, I am looking at this long list that I do not have. I am so upset. I am standing in line looking at this paper with tears running down my face.

But there is one more way I can prove that I am a Missouri resident: a voter registration card. Okay, I actually have that because I plan on voting this year, for the first time in my life, so I had to register back in March. So I go into the election board and get a voter form to take back to the DMV. Two days later, I finally get my ID.

There are so many people in my shoes: unpaid workers living in poverty, our elderly people, people who don't have a State-issued ID. For us, it can be really hard, or even impossible, to get an ID.

□ 1745

If Missouri passes amendment 6—which is an attempt to restrict who could actually register to vote—over 220,000 people may lose their right to vote in our State. The people who would be disenfranchised would be mostly elderly, students, and low-wage workers like myself. Please make sure that all people in our country have the right to vote. Fight for America to be a country of freedom, justice, and equal rights for everyone.

There is one more. Because my grandfather used to say to us, you know, it is very expensive to be poor, and a lot of these statements that I read dealt with the way that people are essentially charged or taxed for being poor. So here is one that comes from Kentucky.

My name is Mary Love, and I have testified in Frankfort, Kentucky, and other places about the payday lending trap. Fourteen years ago, when I was making a pretty good salary, I came up short one month when the rent was due. I saw an ad for a payday lender and I thought, "This will be a good way to cover the rent until I get to payday." So I

applied for their \$200 loan. I gave them a check for \$230, and I walked away with the cash that I needed.

When payday came around, I went into their office and gave them \$230 in cash, and I got my check back. But I wanted to pay off a few more bills, so I wrote them another check that same day for \$400 plus \$60 interest, and I walked away with \$400 cash. Next payday, I did the same thing, and the next and the next and on and on for 2 years.

Because I was paying them an exorbitant amount of interest—\$60 every 2 weeks—I could never catch up. Someone told me that I paid over \$1,400 in interest over 2 years, but I sat down with my computer and recalculated that, and I ended up paying them almost \$2,880 in interest charges over 2 years.

Payday lending as advertised is a one-time solution for emergency financial needs, but all too often the story doesn't end there. Many people like me get loan after loan and end up paying an exorbitant amount of interest. I was finally able to pay all my outstanding debts, but it took me over 2 years to do it.

The payday loan industry is making millions every year by charging exorbitant interest rates and driving consumers deeper into debt. I believe the Bible has something to say about folks engaged in usury. It is past time that politicians stopped letting them engage in this criminal practice.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to yield back to my friend, Ms. JAYAPAL, who has come back with further testimony to read.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. RASKIN for yielding.

You know, that story about payday lending just reminded me of how in the State senate right before I came here, we had to fight back to make sure we stopped the rollback, because we actually were able, with activists from around our community, to pass some of the strongest laws that prevented payday lenders from taking advantage of people, with great off-ramps.

Unfortunately, there were over and over again attempts to try to roll those back, and we at the Federal level need to make sure that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is strong, so that we can make sure that these folks are not getting trapped in payday lending.

So I know we are running short on time. I want to make sure we get some of these read. So let me read another one from my home State. This is testimony from Mashyla Buckmaster.

I am 28 years old. I am a proud single mom of a beautiful 1-year-old named Ella. As of today, I am celebrating almost 2 years clean and sober. I live in Westport in Grays Harbor County, Washington. I have spent 5 years of my life homeless.

Once during my homelessness, a neighbor tried to assault me by throwing a log through the window of the empty building where I was squatting because he was so enraged that homeless people were living on his block.

I got Section 8 housing after my daughter was born just before my organization began providing cold weather shelter to our homeless members. For 110 days last winter, Chaplains on the Harbor hosted about 20 people in our church, most of them millennials who caught a record trying to survive in a county with no good jobs; no decent, affordable housing; horrible healthcare; and plenty of heroin.

Business and property owners were outraged by our cold weather shelter. Our homeless members were stalked by police. Our pastor was threatened with vigilante violence. The same man who had tried to attack me during my own time squatting also assaulted a 19-year-old homeless member of our community on church property and later attempted to run him over with a truck.

I volunteered to stay overnight at our church and keep people safe while they slept. I stayed there through the nights while the threats continued to pour in. I stayed because my community stepped up to save my life, when the rest of society didn't care whether I lived or died, and now it was my turn to protect my community.

I am joining the Poor People's Campaign because I need a movement that is as tough as I am.

Poor and homeless people get stereotyped like we are too stupid or lazy to solve our own problems. I wasn't homeless because I was stupid and lazy. I was homeless because our country has no problem with pregnant mothers being homeless in the dead of the winter, while just 2 hours away in Seattle, the founders of Microsoft and Amazon have made themselves the richest individuals on the planet. You tell me who is messed up in this situation.

Some of you might be suspicious about a Grays Harbor County person getting up in front of this crowd, thinking, "Aren't they just a bunch of rednecks out there?" Hell, yes, we are rednecks. We are radical rednecks. We are hillbillies for the liberation of all people. "We are the living reminder that when they threw out their white trash, they didn't burn it." We are here to stand shoulder to shoulder with anybody taking up this campaign, and trust me, we are the kind of Scrappy you want on your side in a fight.

Mr. RASKIN, that testimony resonates for me, because I represent Seattle where we do have some of the biggest corporations. But I will tell you what, we also have 11,500 homeless people in Seattle. And it has been breaking my heart that my community, so tolerant, so wonderful, so inclusive, has been, unfortunately, turning anger of inequality in our system against people who are experiencing homelessness just like the testimony I just read.

I want to read another one that also strikes home for me, because it is a testimony from the Fight for \$15 in Massachusetts. As you know, I was proud to be on the committee that passed a \$15 minimum wage in Seattle, proud to be one of the first cities in the Fight for \$15.

This is testimony from Deanna Butler, and this is from August of 2016. She is in Massachusetts. I think I said that.

I am a 31-year-old resident of the Dorchester area. I am a fast-food worker and a member of the Fight for \$15. I have been working in the fast-food industry for over 15 years. I work at the Shake Shack, and I make \$11 an hour as an end cashier. I am married with three children ages 8, 14, and 15. My check is the only income for my family, because my husband is disabled and battling with several health conditions.

\$11 an hour isn't much. I have worked other jobs, too. I have worked in the retail industry and at the YMCA. But the one thing I have found in all of those jobs is that anything less than \$15 an hour just isn't enough. It prevents families like mine from thriving to our full potential.

My family receives food stamps and MassHealth, which takes off a heavy load,

but I am still left to figure out how I am going to make my \$350 paycheck stretch for five people. School is about to start again, and I have three kids getting ready to go back to school. I have student loans that I have to pay back, but I am also behind in bills, so I am left to prioritize which bill I can afford to pay this month.

Me and my family have been living in the shelter for 6 years—yes, 6 years—because I don't make enough to afford market rate rent anywhere in the greater Boston area. I don't understand how these multibillion-dollar corporations are able to build an empire on the backs of low-wage workers and get away with making millions in profits while we have nowhere to live and have to depend on brothers and sisters to help us make it through. My kids deserve so much more, and I deserve so much more.

That is why I am fighting for \$15 an hour, so that one day soon, I will be able to provide for my kids the way I have always hoped to. I will be able to go back to school and finish my medical billing program that I had to put on hold, because making poverty wages and taking care of my family made it challenging for me.

We work hard. We deserve more. And people have started to realize that \$15 an hour is the new minimum wage standard. We have been winning in cities across the country, and I hope through this moral revival, we can build a tomorrow where not only the rich matter, but we all matter.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. JAYAPAL for participating in the Special Order.

What does climate change have to do with poverty? Well, today we face accelerating extreme weather events, such as intensifying hurricanes that displaced and impoverished hundreds of thousands of citizens in Louisiana, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, New Jersey.

Here is another way that climate change affects people in poverty: through healthcare events that take them out of the workforce.

Here is the testimony from Liz Betty-Owens from Vermont. She writes:

I am 26, a home care provider and a bartender. Just over a year ago, I was diagnosed with Lyme disease and began a lifelong battle with not only this crippling disease but also the healthcare industry and my struggle to access the healthcare I need.

At 25, I was incredibly ill, attempting to continue my work as a healthcare provider and making all of my healthcare decisions not based on a doctor's recommendation, but based on what my health insurance at the time would cover and what I could afford with my meager out-of-pocket expenses. I realized that BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont had more power over my health and wellbeing than me or my doctor.

I accumulated several thousand dollars of debt, and then, in April, I was booted off my mom's insurance plan because I turned 26. I began the 3-month process of registering for my State's Medicare. I was unable to go to the doctor for months while I was still showing symptoms and recovering from initial treatment. I was held up in the process of trying to prove I made such a small yearly income that I was in fact eligible for the State's Green Mountain health plan. And ever since I was finally accepted, I have had to try and tread a careful line making sure I don't make too much money and get booted off the State plan, risking fines from lack of health insurance and, yet again, not having

access to the care that I need as I fight this debilitating disease.

It is devastating to experience the exhausting and harmful approach of a healthcare system controlled by insurance companies, Big Pharma, and hospital monstrosities that care more about the bottom line than the needs of healthcare workers and patients, rather than living in a society where everyone can get the care they need and have it be solely based on decisions between the individual and the doctor. It is exhausting to know that I am already struggling with this at the age of 26 and that I live in a rapidly aging State where an entire generation will have to fight to get the care they need. And home care providers like myself will be caught in the crossfire of providing care services with working people who are not allowed the resources to compensate for the care that they actually need.

It is also terrifying being diagnosed with Lyme disease, which is transmitted by a tick bug that is infected by a bacterium. As weather patterns continue to hit new extremes because of climate change and the northeast continues to warm, the number of infected tick bugs is only expected to grow. The people at the greatest risk are those of us who work outdoors growing food or working on farms, maintaining State and Federal lands, and our heightened risk to this disease is made even more terrifying by the continued threat of our already limited access to healthcare.

We need universal healthcare as a human right and a public good, and not a commodity to buy and sell. We need this Poor People's Campaign to unite the poor and dispossessed, and indict the immoral status quo that produces poverty and is ravaging our communities.

Mr. Speaker, with those words, I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAST). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 30 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight, and have chosen not to attend the Congressional Baseball Game, because I think I have an important message that needs to be heard.

I rise to elevate an economic and humanitarian issue that is manifesting itself across Ohio, our Nation, and our continent. Millions upon millions of workers, many landless workers essential to getting America's work done in agriculture and other sectors, live and toil in an eerie, shadow existence.

These workers often are exploited due to our broken immigration and legal systems, which afford them and their work no respect.

Our beloved father, Steven, would say: "They are caught between the Devil and the deep blue sea."

Let's take a peek inside who some of these workers really are.

These workers dare to climb skyscrapers and install the steel beams and pour concrete across our country, one slip away from death.

They embrace harsh work circumstances, going into the brutally hot Sun in the south and west, picking your vegetables and fruits for 12 to 16 hours a day at high season.

In our vast tobacco fields, they work from sunup to sundown, picking off flowers from tobacco plants in the blistering 110-degree heat as their fingers and hands numb from the nicotine and their sweaty sunburned bodies turn ripe for melanoma skin cancer, and they have no health insurance.

□ 1800

They work in hot steam chambers cleaning our laundry in the big cities and in the very, very difficult environments of slaughterhouses using electrified cutting equipment, and they are covered in blood in those slaughterhouses for the meat that we eat.

They trudge through manure in dairy farms; and they harvest mushrooms sold in every store, in the grocery stores around this country; in cold, damp, dark, underground caves, walking through horse dung.

They catch, by hand, thousands of chickens every night in the dark, hot coops that generally have 25,000 or more chickens each, where the stench and the dust are life-threatening.

They clean bathrooms in amusement parks, along State turnpikes, and in airports.

And why do they do this work? To survive, while holding out hope for a better life for them and their loved ones.

Without these workers, our tables would be bereft of the food we depend upon. America could not feed itself.

Without these workers, companies would have to pay higher wages and offer health insurance to do the work.

Indeed, many, many, many millions of these workers are uprooted, actually, continental labor refugees, spit out of vicious and violent economic and political systems across the Americas. Yet continental trade compacts like NAFTA and CAFTA were designed purposefully to create this landless class of laborers to purposely undervalue them and their work.

NAFTA caused millions of these workers to be upended and lose their small farmsteads in Mexico, precipitating the largest human exodus from the land in modern history. And, reciprocally, in our country, millions of Americans lost their jobs in factories and farms across the Nation as our jobs were shipped south.

Trade agreements have failed workers on this continent in their homelands; and many of those south of our border fled—fled—to find ways to make a living, drawn by worker shortages in many countries, including our own, finding work in the most unappealing jobs, jobs our citizens won't take.

Now, for those who came here to work, they face even more cruelty by the Trump administration and many Members of this body, too, as their children and families are being ripped apart. And I am going to tell you a story about that in a second.

News reports are beginning to reveal the edges of this ugly system of de facto human bondage. Our Nation,